

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION GUIDELINES

Federal Highway Administration
Arizona Division

and

Arizona Department of Transportation

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Categorical Exclusions (CE) are actions which meet the definition contained in the National Environmental Policy Act, 40 CFR 1508.4 and, based on past experience, do not involve substantial environmental impacts.

Additional actions not identified in 23 CFR 771.117 (c) and (d) but meeting the criteria of 23 CFR 771.117 (a) and (b) may be designated as CEs upon submission of documentation to FHWA for approval.

Based on Title 23, Highways, 23 CFR 771.117, these guidelines apply to FHWA-sponsored projects.

Categorical Exclusion Group 1

Two different types of documentation may be applicable:

- 1) Clearance memo only or 2) CE checklist with a clearance memo

Documentation: ADOT Clearance Memo only Note: Clearance memo may contain mitigation

Actions identified below that meet the criteria of 23 CFR 771.117(a) and (b), normally do not require further approvals by FHWA. (23 CFR 771.117 [c]) A copy of the ADOT clearance memo will be sent to FHWA.

TYPES OF PROJECTS:

Emergency repairs under 23 USC 125

Activities which do not involve or lead directly to construction, such as:

- planning and technical studies

- grants for training and research programs research activities defined in 23 USC 307

- engineering to define the elements of a proposed action

- engineering to define alternatives of a proposed action

- approval of project concepts

Acquisition of scenic easements

Transfer of federal lands pursuant to 23 USC 317 when the subsequent action is not an FHWA action

Striping for bike lanes on existing pavement

Track and railbed maintenance, installation and upgrade of railroad warning devices when carried out within existing right-of-way - see EPG RR clearance guidance

Alterations to vehicles to make them accessible for elderly and handicapped persons

Installation of pavement markers on existing pavement Rideshare activities

Determination of payback under 23 CFR part 480 for property previously acquired with federal aid participation

Purchase and installation of operating or maintenance equipment to be located within a transit facility with no significant impacts offsite

Documentation: CE Checklist and ADOT Clearance Memo

Note: These clearances may be tiered off previous clearances that are still valid

Actions identified below that meet the criteria of 23 CFR 771.117(a) and (b), may be designated as CE Group 1 upon submission of documentation that demonstrates substantial impacts will not result. A copy of the ADOT clearance memo and appropriate documentation will be sent to FHWA.

TYPES OF PROJECTS:

Utility installations along or across a transportation facility

Construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities

Landscaping

Installation of fencing, signs, small passenger shelters, traffic signals, railroad warning devices outside the right-of-way

Alterations to facilities to make them accessible for elderly and handicapped persons

Categorical Exclusion Group 2

Documentation: Categorical Exclusion Document and ADOT Clearance Memo Note: These clearances may be tiered off previous clearances that are still valid

Actions that qualify under 23 CFR 771.117(d) that meet the criteria of 23 CFR 771.117(a) and (b) may be designated as CEs upon submission of documentation that demonstrates the specific conditions or criteria for those CEs are satisfied and substantial impacts will not result. A copy of the ADOT clearance memo and appropriate documentation will be sent to FHWA.

TYPES OF PROJECTS:

Modernization of a highway by:

- resurfacing,
- restoration,
- rehabilitation,
- reconstruction,

Adding shoulders

Adding auxiliary lanes (e.g., parking, weaving, turning, climbing)

Highway safety or traffic operations improvement projects

Installation of ramp metering control devices

Installation of lighting

Bridge rehabilitation

Bridge reconstruction

Bridge Replacement

Construction of grade separation to replace existing at-grade railroad crossings

Transportation corridor fringe parking facilities

Construction of new truck weigh stations

Construction of new rest areas

Disposal of excess right-of-way

Joint or limited use of right-of-way where the proposed use does not have significant adverse impacts

Approvals for change of access

Construction of new bus storage and maintenance facilities based on the following:

- in a predominantly industrial or transportation use area

- consistent with existing zoning

- located on or near a street with adequate capacity for bus and support vehicle traffic

Rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing rail and bus buildings and ancillary facilities based on the following:

- only minor amounts of additional land are required

- no substantial increase in number of users

Construction of bus transfer facilities based on the following:

- located in commercial area or other high activity center

- adequate street capacity for projected bus traffic

Construction of rail storage and maintenance facilities based on the following:

- located in industrial or transportation use area

- consistent with existing zoning

- no significant noise impact on surrounding community

Acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes based on the following:

- allowed only for a particular parcel or limited number of parcels

- acquisition will not limit the evaluation of alternatives in the NEPA process

Other activities where a pattern emerges of granting CE status